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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the evaluative criteria used by administrators at a southern, metropolitan university to define institutional effectiveness and to determine the congruency between those criteria and the institution's metropolitan mission. Four focus groups were conducted with 22 administrators (vice chancellors, associate and assistant vice chancellors, academic deans, and department chairs). In addition, a personal interview was conducted with the university chancellor. Content analysis of the focus group data was used to categorize the evaluative criteria into three constructs: educational "geography" (the specifics of the educational process or the content of education; "terrain" (the fitness of the university environment to accommodate the purpose of the process or the context of education; and "landscape" (the higher education benefit to the individual and to society). The findings indicate that the evaluative criteria used by the university leaders were congruent with the philosophical focus on teaching, research, and public service as communicated within the metropolitan university mission. A lack of congruency between the evaluative criteria and the metropolitan mission was found in the importance given to applied research and the evaluative criteria and terminology regarding the university's partnership with the metropolitan region. A declaration of metropolitan universities is appended. (Contains 17 references.) (WD)

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Running head: INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Defining Institutional Effectiveness for a Metropolitan University

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental premise of the metropolitan university mission is the symbiotic relationship between the university and the surrounding metropolitan area. Because metropolitan university administrators serve as resource allocators and information gatekeepers for their universities, the success of the metropolitan mission is dependent upon their motivation to implement a strategic plan congruent with the metropolitan philosophy. It is suggested that this motivation to implement the metropolitan mission is related to the congruency between the criteria administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness and the components of the metropolitan mission.

Using a qualitative research design with a focus group method of inquiry, the purpose of this study was to explore the evaluative criteria of administrators from a southern, metropolitan university and to compare those criteria with the metropolitan mission. Four focus group sessions were conducted with 22 administrators from the following administrator levels: (a) vice chancellors, (b) associate and assistant vice chancellors, (c) academic deans, and (d) department chairs. A personal interview was conducted with the university Chancellor. The focus group guide was designed to indirectly explore evaluative criteria through a discussion of the ideal university. A content analysis procedure was used to analyze the focus group data.

The focus group data were reduced into six attitude trends. The criteria -- gleaned from these attitude trends -- used by administrators to evaluate the effectiveness of their institution addressed three areas of the university experience: (a) geography, (b) terrain, and (c) landscape. The geography was defined as the specifics of the educational process or the content of education. The terrain included those criteria which addressed the fitness of the university environment to accommodate the purpose of the process or the context of education. Finally, the landscape was defined as the broad view of the higher education benefit to the individual and to society. (The attitude trends and the evaluative criteria are discussed in detail in the paper.) Finally, the evaluative criteria were compared with the components of the metropolitan mission to determine congruency.

Defining Institutional Effectiveness for a Metropolitan University

There is a new kid-on-the-block in the higher education neighborhood: the metropolitan university. A term first coined during the early 1980s in response to a perceived need to enhance and broaden the definition of the urban university, the metropolitan university label encompasses more than just a description based on "size, student profile, or program mix" (Hathaway, Mulhollan, & White, 1995, p. 9). According to Hathaway et al., the primary characteristic of a metropolitan university is the development of a "symbiotic relationship" between the university and the surrounding community (p. 13).

Included within this symbiotic relationship are changes to the traditional focus on the three guiding principles of the academy – teaching, research, and outreach. For the metropolitan university, teaching encompasses a widen embrace of pedagogical skills and techniques that enhance the learning of a diverse metropolitan student population. Research, for the metropolitan university, is an appropriate blend of theory and practice conducted in synergy with the needs of the metropolis and using the surrounding community as a "living laboratory" (Hathaway et al., 1995, p. 11). With the teaching and research components of the metropolitan mission in place, outreach becomes the next logical step in building a cooperative relationship between the community and the university: a step in which pedagogy and research operate in harmony to find solutions to address metropolitan challenges.

Stukel (1994) describes the opportunities available for metropolitan universities in the following statement:

> By seizing on urban issues, we can create an identity that will differentiate us from the older, more traditional universities, many of which are located in small or medium-sized towns. We will be dealing with the real issues -- crime, taxes, the economy, elementary and secondary education -- the issues that are on people's minds every day of the year. And this, in turn, will generate public and political support which are going to be increasingly necessary in this era of diminishing resources. (p. 92)

Problem Statement

To date, the literature on the metropolitan university movement has focused attention on the definition and characteristics of the metropolitan university while attempting to build an argument for the necessity of the metropolitan mission within the higher education stratum. The literature, however, has not yet offered evidence as to the congruency between the components of the metropolitan mission and the criteria used by university administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness (see Appendix for the "Declaration of Metropolitan Universities"). According to Hathaway et al. (1995), the success of the metropolitan mission is dependent upon the motivation of administrators to develop a strategic plan congruent with the metropolitan philosophy. If that is true, then it is imperative at this early stage in the evolution of the metropolitan movement, to explore administrator attitudes toward institutional effectiveness and the metropolitan university mission.

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the criteria used by administrators of a metropolitan university to evaluate institutional effectiveness and to determine the congruency between those criteria and the metropolitan mission. This purpose is significant to the current literature on the metropolitan university, in that, it will provide an understanding of the viability of the metropolitan mission as it relates to administrator perceptions of effectiveness.

To accomplish the purpose of this study, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What criteria do metropolitan university administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness?
2. Does a congruency exist between the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness and the metropolitan mission?

The Metropolitan University Movement

There are many aspects of the metropolitan university that set it apart from more traditional models of higher education. First, the metropolitan university is located in an urban setting with a large percentage of students place-bound to that area. These metropolitan regions can engulf a surprising number of rural and small town communities. It is estimated that approximately 80% of Americans live in a metropolitan area (Lapping, 1995). Second, students of a metropolitan university tend to be highly diverse in age, ethnic and racial identity, and socio-economic background (Lynton, 1995; Lynton, 1996c). These students are equally diverse in terms of their career aspirations and the timing of their enrollment in college. Metropolitan universities realize their promise as vernacular institutions by meeting the needs and challenges of this diverse student population (Lapping, 1995).

Third, because of the symbiotic relationship between town and gown, metropolitan universities are becoming prominent partners in the economic development of their regions. Furthermore, because they recognize that they: a) are stakeholders in the area, b) have an acknowledged and accepted public outreach role in their region, and c) have access to a mix of resources that is crucial to the economic vitality of the metropolis, these institutions are committing themselves to fostering public and private sector cooperation.

The goal of the metropolitan university is to address metropolitan problems through applied research that is aimed at solving urban problems, teaching that includes practical application and that meets the diverse needs of metropolitan students, and outreach that includes building partnerships with other metropolitan institutions (Lynton, 1996a; Lynton, 1996b).

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness as a policy provides direction to the institution, improves the quality of instructional programs and services, and assures accountability to both internal and external constituencies by demonstrating the extent to which a college or university achieves its stated mission or purpose (SCHEA Network, 1994). Therefore, the basis of institutional effectiveness is formed by a committed college community with an appropriate mission statement and effective institutional processes.

Assessment activities by higher education institutions have increased steadily to meet the demands of legislators, taxpayers, parents, and accreditation agencies. Assessment's role in planning and administration is to help inform increasingly salient decisions about program priorities (Ewell, 1997). The primary purpose of assessment is to document and improve institutional effectiveness. Cress (1996) advocates that:

> rather than searching for a single indicator to demonstrate success, institutions can foster climates that value the use of many different benchmarks as evidence of institutional effectiveness, thereby, assuring the public and themselves that students are being well-served by higher education. (p. 4)

In this era of reduced revenues, institutions of higher education are being asked to demonstrate their worth. The increasing complexities of our country's social, economic, political, educational, and cultural systems point toward an even more important role for higher education in urban areas (Thompson, 1995). As states face fiscal crises, assessment of university effectiveness is becoming a matter of state policy (Hudgin, 1993). As institutions of higher education are coming under increased scrutiny, some policy makers are calling upon universities to adapt their mission to focus on applied research and outreach that addresses important social issues, as metropolitan universities seek to do. Metropolitan universities are being challenged to assist in solving societal problems and to pioneer new patterns of education that will improve the quality of life for tomorrow's citizens (Thompson, 1995).

The accountability issue that faces institutions of higher learning present several challenges. As Roger Peters (1994) stated, "our society, the public sector wants assurance that their money is well spent." (p. 19) Furthermore, according to Tucker (1995),

> We need scholarship now that can prove its worth not solely on its own terms and beauty, but also for the service it may provide...If we can learn to focus this intellectual resource on significant social issues, the credibility of higher education and the appreciation of its value can absolutely soar. (p.81)

The role and mission of the metropolitan university appears to be in line with these expectations. According to Stukel (1994), the role of the metropolitan university "is not to be 'in the city,' but to be a part of the city" (p. 88). However, an important question

remains: Do university administrators perceive a correlation between achieving effectiveness for their institution and the components of this synergetic mission? The answer to this question is crucial to understanding the possibility of success for the metropolitan university movement. Whereas, there have been studies which investigate the views of higher education administrators concerning institutional effectiveness, the views of administrators in metropolitan universities have not yet been the focus of empirical investigation (Cameron, 1978).

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative research design was used in this study to explore the criteria used by metropolitan university administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness and to determine the congruency between those criteria and the characteristics of the metropolitan mission. A focus group method of inquiry was employed to investigate the evaluative criteria used by administrators of a southern, metropolitan university.

Recruiting Focus Group Participants

A purposive sample in the following administrative schema was employed to select candidates for each focus group session: (a) vice chancellors, (b) associate and assistant vice chancellors, (c) college academic deans, and (d) department chairs. In a study of institutional effectiveness in higher education, Cameron (1978) supported the use of this sampling schema for two reasons: these administrators are (a) "the resource allocators, the determiners of organizational policy, and the explicators of organizational goals" for the institution and (b) a "knowledgeable source about each of the organizational aspects under investigation at the institutional level" (p. 307). A personal interview was conducted with the university Chancellor.

One focus group session was conducted with each administrative level. A separate personal interview was conducted with the university chancellor. Twenty-two administrators participated in four focus group sessions conducted during the summer, 1997. Of the 22 administrators, there were six vice chancellors, four associate and

assistant vice chancellors, six college academic deans, and six department chairs. The vice chancellor and academic dean participants were recruited by the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Their focus group sessions were conducted in the time-slot normally reserved by these groups for their weekly staff meetings with the Provost.

The researchers contacted the associate and assistant vice chancellors and department chairs by electronic mail and requested their participation in a focus group session. Reminder electronic messages were sent to all focus group participants the day before each session.

Data Collection

Four focus group sessions were conducted on-campus, during the day, in a university conference room with each session approximately one hour in duration. All focus group sessions were audio-recorded to ease data analysis. In the first contact made with each focus group participant, permission was obtained to record the proceedings of the focus group sessions. At the beginning of each session, participants were once again reminded of the audio-recording of the session and given the opportunity to leave if they had anonymity concerns. All participants signed a detailed consent form.

In each session, the primary researcher served as the moderator of the focus group. It was the responsibility of the moderator to facilitate the discussion of the group. Along with the moderator, a scribe attended each session to observe the data collection process and ensure moderator objectivity. The scribe sat at a table in the room away from the group and took notes on the mood of the session. In addition, any significant verbal or nonverbal cues were noted by the scribe. Both the researcher and the scribe signed confidentiality forms.

Focus Group Guide

The focus group guide was replicated from research conducted by Franklin (1996) on institutional effectiveness with a regional, comprehensive university. In that study, Franklin determined that the most appropriate method to discover administrator attitudes

concerning institutional effectiveness was by way of "phenomenological reduction" (Ozmon & Craver, 1990, p. 254). The purpose of this phenomenological reduction was to "peel away" the layers of political posturing by which these administrators might, during a normal discourse with other campus administrators, use as a smoke screen to mask their true attitudes concerning effectiveness. More simply, Franklin was concerned that direct inquiries of administrators concerning their criteria for determining institutional effectiveness might produce answers that were the "politically correct" responses on the campus at that time. Therefore, the focus group guide was designed to indirectly explore the topic of the ideal university in the hope of peeling away any political facade to reach the "original thought" (Ozmon & Craver, 1990, p. 254). Because the data analysis in the original research provided appropriate answers to the research questions, Franklin determined that the focus group guide design was valid.

Likewise, the researchers of this study had a similar concern about the potential political posturing of administrators as related to their attitudes about institutional effectiveness. In addition to the concern with directly exploring institutional effectiveness, the researchers were also apprehensive about referencing the metropolitan university term during focus group sessions. The administrators participating in this study were employed by a university, in which, upper management had attached the metropolitan label. During the past decade, the metropolitan term had been a topic of on-going discussion among faculty and administrators. It was reasonable to assume that these administrators were well-versed in all the components of the metropolitan mission. Therefore, a focus group guide designed to directly query administrators on the criteria they use to evaluate the institutional effectiveness of a metropolitan university was deemed as an invalid method to explore the true, original thought of these administrators concerning effectiveness. To reduce the perceived negative influence of using the institutional effectiveness and metropolitan university terms during the focus group session, the researchers chose to replicate the focus group guide used by Franklin (1996).

Data Analysis Protocol

Content analysis of the focus group data was performed in the following sequence:

- A debriefing session was held between the moderator and the scribe immediately following each focus group session. The purpose of the session was to capture first impressions and reach consensus with regard to the overall tone of the session, as well as to ensure moderator objectivity.
- The audio-recording of each session was transcribed by a paid, professional transcriptionist.
- A follow-up meeting of the moderator and scribe was scheduled, as needed, to review the written transcript and to make notes directly on the transcript to match verbal interaction and nonverbal cues.
- Transcripts from each focus group session were coded into data units using the following procedure:
    - The moderator and two coders read through the transcripts to determine coding categories. (A code is a single word that best summarizes themes, concepts or ideas which formulate an attitude.)
    - Ethnograph v4.0 software was used by the moderator and coders to read the transcript and code data into categories.
    - Two auditors who were knowledgeable in the research topic reviewed the transcript of each focus group session and developed a second, independent set of coding categories. The coding categories of the auditors were compared with the categories of the moderator and coders to determine differences in coding. These differences were negotiated until an agreement was made on the proper coding categories.
    - A code book was developed within the Ethnograph v4.0 to define and track each code category.
    - The coding categories were combined, based on a common theme, into attitude patterns by the moderator and coders. Simultaneously, an auditor also reduced the coding categories into attitude patterns. All of the researchers compared the attitude patterns of the coders with the patterns of the auditor and differences

between the patterns were negotiated until consensus was reached by the researchers.

- The moderator wrote an informal memo of each emerging pattern. (Memoing is a summary of each attitude pattern.)
- The attitude patterns were combined, based on common themes, into attitude trends.
- The moderator wrote proposition statements based on the memoing of each attitude pattern. (Proposition statements are the formal summary statements of the overall attitude trends based on the memo of each attitude pattern.) The use of this process helped researchers to formulate, refine, and link concepts to create a clear description of the emerging attitude trends.
- The moderator converted the proposition statements into the criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness.
- The criteria used by administrators to evaluate institutional effectiveness were compared and contrasted with the metropolitan university mission to determine congruency.

Delimitation

Because of the qualitative nature of this research design, the discussion with administrators from only one metropolitan university, and the use of a purposive sample, the conclusions drawn from the findings of this research are generalizeable only to those administrators who participated in this study. This study is an exploration into the attitudes of a select group of administrators on a single topic; it is not intended as a verification of fact.

Limitation

The focus group guide was designed to indirectly explore administrator attitudes concerning effectiveness in an attempt to avoid hearing the politically-correct attitudes for a metropolitan university. In addition, the moderator of the focus group sessions avoided using "institutional effectiveness" and "metropolitan university" during the course of the focus group discussion. However, even with these attempts at phenomenological reduction, the conclusions drawn from this research should be interpreted with the recognition that the attitudes portrayed in this study may represent the "party line" for the university and do not represent the original thought of these administrators.

FINDINGS

The data from the focus group sessions were reduced into six attitude trends. These six trends were given the following labels: a) the definition of higher education, b) the assessment of higher education, c) the higher education curriculum, d) selection of students for the higher education opportunity, e) student's readiness to learn, and f) developing a scholarly community.

Attitude Trend: The Definition of Higher Education

According to the administrators in this study, higher education is a complex environment in which learners have an opportunity to develop a sense of self, to synthesize knowledge and acquire employable skills. In addition, this environment offers students a variety of life-choices which can enhance life-quality. For one vice chancellor, "...higher education's purpose is to help people in a society to lead a more productive and abundant life." For these administrators, any meaningful definition of higher education would include the importance of providing students with the tools to build a better life -- not just a better job. As stated by a department chair, "the university is also about learning to live meaningfully as opposed to simply learning a skill by which you get your bread."

They also emphasized the importance of an effective higher education process to ensuring a quality environment for all participants. According to the attitude shared by these leaders, the effective process is the result of an exacting recipe which includes a perfect blend of knowledge synthesis, societal embrace, institutional mission, and societal product. Furthermore, they lauded the value of the contemporary higher education structure in America which supports institutional diversity. The value of this structure is the opportunity of each institution to design a mission that is congruent with their constituency and develop a process and an environment in support of that mission.

Knowledge Synthesis

In the view of the metropolitan university leaders who participated in these focus group sessions, the value of higher education resides in the ability of higher education to synthesize global knowledge. It is the convenient offering of quality information, that is

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diverse in origin, content, and context, that sets higher education apart from other institutions in our society. As stated by one administrator, the value of higher education resides in providing an environment which includes "...knowledge from all over the world, from many families, and many villages, and [that knowledge] is available in our libraries and in archival form. We are also constantly trying to develop new knowledge."

This knowledge convenience is accomplished by way of written communication in the process of publishing, by way of oral communication in the process of teaching, and by way of practical application in the process of outreach. One administrator discussed the role of oral communication in higher education as a "storytelling" process, "...all these stories collectively define civilization....and a university is a place where you learn those stories and you also learn the stories of you."

Higher education, for these leaders, is a process of "building" education by taking in all of the information pieces and combining them into a coherent whole. This building of education ensures an efficient learning process. For one administrator, this synthesis of knowledge helps students to understand "...who we are and where we came from, and who our ancestors are in terms of their languages, and ethics, and values."

Societal Embrace

Some administrators expressed the concern that society does not recognize the value of higher education nor does society have respect for the higher education process, product, or stakeholders. These administrators pointed to the need for increased communication from higher education institutions to society with regard to the value of the higher education experience. One department chair stated, "I am convinced, without a shadow of a doubt, that nobody [in society] thinks about or [values] higher education the way we do..."

Institutional Mission

These educational leaders shared the opinion that there are individuals in our society who do not agree with the idea that higher education has been successful. It would seem that as more and more individuals experience the higher education process, more and more societal participants express concern for the value of that process. According to one dean,

"I'm not certain that everybody agrees that higher education has done a wonderful job. We are caught up in our own success." According to these administrators, the reason for the current dissatisfaction with the higher education process resides in the inability or unwillingness of higher education institutions to adapt their institutional mission or vision to accommodate the changing demand of society. Another administrator stated, "Our society is transforming, but we have not transformed our message."

Societal Product

In the opinion of this group of university leaders, the purpose of higher education is to move humanity forward and provide societal, as well as, employment leaders. "[Higher education] is also responsible for all the major advances in our society." These leaders believed that the higher education process does produce individuals who are productive members of society and make intelligent choices based on their advanced knowledge. According to one administrator, "[the purpose of education] is to try to move humanity forward in time and develop a higher [level] of consciousness." Another administrator stated, "It is for the personal good of the individual, but it is also good for the community because it raises the level of the community and it is a societal advantage in addition to a personal advantage." A third administrator commented, " ...when I think in terms of the end product, I would like to see a student who will come through and can demonstrate that he or she has acquired the necessary skills that would denote an educated person and also be able to go into the larger community and make some tangible contribution."

Because of university teaching and research, each successive generation benefits from the education of a previous generation. These leaders emphasized the importance of collaboration between higher education institutions and other non-traditional education alternatives to provide society with a coherent and cohesive education experience generation after generation.

Institutional Stratification

Finally, there was a belief shared by some administrators that the higher education experience resides at the apex of the educational process. Therefore, as the capstone of the K-12 experience, higher education has a responsibility to be involved with the quality of

education in the K-12 process. As stated by one vice chancellor, " ...to me higher education is, in a sense, a kind of fountainhead that nourishes lower education." Furthermore, some administrators expressed the opinion that within the higher education system there are a variety of institutions with their own unique mission to serve a specific clientele. This institutional diversity is valuable, in that, students have the opportunity to choose the higher education experience that makes the most sense for them based on geography, economics, ability, financial support, and inclination. Because of this diversity, these educational leaders believed that there is no single definition of the ideal university. "I think given the assumption that there are varied institutions that meet varied needs, I don't think there is an ideal university."

Attitude Trend: The Assessment of Higher Education

During the focus group sessions, administrators frequently discussed the importance of assessing the effectiveness of the higher education process and environment. They addressed both the quantitative and qualitative sides of assessing higher education quality. Furthermore, these administrators talked of the value of assessing student satisfaction in order to understand the motives which move a student toward satisfaction. Finally, they discussed the link between the state and higher education and the influence of that link on the assessment of quality.

The "Numbers" of Higher Education

The administrators participating in these focus group sessions believed that the push for assessment in higher education stems from a societal desire for a return on their investment in the process. In line with that societal focus on higher education, some administrators supported the belief that a summation of the business "numbers" of education was a valid measurement of quality. For those administrators, an assessment of the quality numbers would include: a) the number of graduates, b) the number of dollars allocated, c) the number of complaints, and d) the quantitative measurement of proficiency and productivity. As one department chair stated, "...if I am explaining to somebody about higher education, I feel [that first] I need to let them know that it is a business." A vice

chancellor offered the following comment, "We measure effectiveness [in our department] by the number of complaints received from students, faculty and staff."

Qualitative Components of Higher Education

On the other hand, some administrators expressed a concern that the current assessment of quality in higher education focuses only on the business side of education to the detriment of ensuring the quality of the education process. As one department chair lamented, "Yes, there is a business-like characteristic to what we do. There has to be, but if that becomes the primary paradigm, then we become more interested in proficiency, productivity, and counting those beans whether [those beans are] articles published or students [graduated]....people who run universities these days often ...are not academic; they are business people." Another department chair stated, "It seems to me that is where the pressure is coming right now, for us to do assessment strictly by the numbers. My dean seems to be more concerned about [the numbers] -- for example, how many students and how many credit hours generated -- than in the quality of [the faculty] or the textbooks.

These administrators stressed that the primary purpose of assessment is to ensure the development of an educated person who can demonstrate competency and contribute to society. One administrator queried, "Are we effective if we graduate more people or are we effective for turning out higher quality people? Are [parents] paying for their child to get a job or are they paying for betterment in their family?"

Finally, still other administrators in this study shared the opinion that the most appropriate method of assessment examined quality from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. One administrator stated, "I think, at certain times, there is probably a tendency to overemphasize the numbers and under emphasize the quality....I think we can use both of those in making a determination about whether an institution, or a university, is meeting its goals or functions.

Student Satisfaction

Administrators expressed the belief that student satisfaction is a disconfirmation between student expectations and the meeting of those expectations by providers of the higher education experience. For many of these leaders, the assessment of student

satisfaction is an important component in the measurement of quality. "Another way to evaluate, and particularly in my area, would be by the level of satisfaction of the students."

These university leaders expressed a shared belief that the "quality of the process" and the "convenience of the process" are, both, equally important to students and are defined based on individual expectations. According to one vice chancellor, "It [would] be interesting...to see how much [a student's] rating of an institution's effectiveness is related to processes of the institution rather than the actual instruction." Another vice chancellor stated, "Quality and convenience: Those are very important to students."

State Role In Higher Education

Some administrators discussed the vital importance of the state role in higher education. They believed that state leaders support two higher education responsibilities: a) certifying individuals for specific jobs and b) providing equal opportunity of education for society. According to one dean, "The government has the role in encouraging education for two different reasons. One role is that the government has certain jobs or professions that [dictates that] people must know certain things. The second: Everyone should have the opportunity to learn, regardless of gender, race, etc." By recognizing these two responsibilities, the university leaders in this study believed that "quality-in-teaching" is the most important consideration to ensure the continued financial support from the state. This continued support from the state was an important consideration for these administrators who recognized their dependency on state largess for the on-going health of their institution.

Attitude Trend: Higher Education Curriculum

In the focus group discussions, these administrators underscored the importance of the higher education curriculum to their evaluation of institutional effectiveness. These discussions focused on: a) the purpose of the higher education curriculum, b) the value of quality knowledge transmission, c) understanding the stage development of higher education students, d) the importance of a holistic education, and e) the instrumental nature of higher education.

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Purpose of the Higher Education Curriculum

Administrators expressed an educational philosophy that focused on a curriculum purpose of disseminating knowledge to the local community, and beyond. As one administrator stated, "I think the purpose of higher education is to first give [knowledge] on a communal level and then on a global level." Another administrator viewed the dissemination of knowledge as an opportunity for students to, "...learn from the experiences of others." In the view of these educational leaders, the curriculum should: a) "add on to" the life experiences of the student, b) provide the student with practical knowledge that is relevant to their life, and c) teach the student the "why's" of education.

Knowledge Delivery

Administrators discussed a variety of ways in which knowledge is delivered. For these administrators, the ideal university provides students with a variety of knowledge delivery options to accommodate the learning needs of a diverse student population. One vice chancellor stated, "I would like to see [our organizations] complex enough to offer avenues to people in a variety of circumstances. I think that means some people need the on-campus experience and some don't." Another stated, "...diversity is extremely important and I believe it is possible to create a university that is responsive to students and tries to offer different kinds of resources and instruction depending on [the student's] level and purpose." Still another commented, "I think the ideal [university] would be something that would have a very broad capacity to accommodate different student needs and interests and then to deliver through a variety of methods."

Furthermore, administrators shared the belief that higher education faculty and higher education institutions are not the only sources of knowledge and are not the only mechanisms available to effectively deliver knowledge. "We [higher education institutions] are not the only place where you can gain knowledge." With this recognition, these educational leaders stressed the importance of developing a structure to allow diversity in knowledge delivery in order to remain competitive in the knowledge industry. "I think you have to figure out what vehicles, in terms of structure and organization, will accommodate the needs of people."

Because of the importance of knowledge delivery in accomplishing the purpose of

the higher education institution, these administrators stressed the necessity of good communication skills in the effective dissemination of knowledge.

Stage Development

Some administrators expressed a belief that learning is a stage development process requiring that students learn in steps. One associate vice chancellor compared the higher education process of learning to the learning of small children; "...you probably have watched little children grow and you have seen how they go through these steps of gradually learning things..." According to these leaders, because of the differing stages of individual students, a variety of teaching methods should be offered to students to accommodate their individual learning stage.

Furthermore, for these administrators, individualized instruction is an important component of the ideal university. Therefore, the role of teaching in the ideal university is to guide the learner through their stages in the learning process by focusing on individualized instruction. One administrator stated, "...then there are smaller, more meaningful, relationships between professors and students [characterized by] individualized instruction. [In these relationships, faculty are] taking the time to work with students to try to develop their values, sense of self , their objectives, and how they want to live their life."

Holistic Education

Some administrators believed that the university should provide for the development of the whole person, to include spiritual development. The value of mentoring as a means of providing students with this holistic experience were discussed. Administrators made the following comments about the importance of holistic education:

> "[The curriculum] provides for personal development beyond simply learning a trade or a skill to survive."

> "You help students learn to go across boundaries and, if that happens, I think that is when people start realizing that they are living with meaning as opposed to just getting a living."

"I think at the university level that is part of our job, at the very beginning, to try to understand where students are so that we know how far we can take them and in what direction we can sort of foster their development."

"Education is also simply to satisfy curiosity...So, it is an intellectual process which goes far beyond just learning an occupation."

"...education to round out the spirit and the mind."

On mentoring, one administrator stated, "There are often [faculty] who come along and actually help [students] along and show them what to do."

Instrumental Nature of Higher Education

Administrators discussed the idea that higher education provides individuals with the opportunity to specialize in a specific area. Because of this opportunity for specialization and skill attainment in one area, the major becomes an important part of a student's advanced learning process. One administrator commented, "[Students] have a major in something; they leave here with a high level of knowledge and/or skills."

Administrators also talked about how higher education serves the function of providing a certification process for employment. The value of the higher education certification process to society is the ability to identify those who have had the academic preparation for success in a profession. Because of this process, society is moving away from a liberal arts focus to a vocational focus for higher education. As one dean lamented, "[In the past, the focus was on a] broad liberal arts education which was to establish the foundation for the good life. I see that has changed over the years. It seems to me that most people who come [to] higher education now come with the expectation to prepare for a job." One administrator stated, "To the majority of the students, unfortunately, the education is not what they are after. They are after a ticket to a job. So their [sense of accomplishment] would be whether or not they were able to get a job and succeed in that job." One administrator commented, "I think the expectation of the general public is that education leads to a job. Parents send their children to school so that they will get a job at

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the end of it." Finally, a department chair summed up the instrumental purpose of higher education with the following observation about the attitude toward higher education in America, "A university is a place to go where you learn to [make] a living."

A few administrators maintained that while higher education institutions may be doing a good job of providing basic employment skills for students, they are not ensuring that students have an understanding of the logic behind the profession and the ethics associated with that logic. According to one dean, "[Student learning] is much more narrowly focused and they know how to do a job, but they don't know why they do it and they don't know the ethics behind it. That is the dilemma that is faced in law school, medical school, and, I guess, business education."

Attitude Trend: Selecting Students for the Higher Education Opportunity

According to views expressed in the focus group sessions with administrators, the student selection process in higher education does have an affect on institutional effectiveness. The prominent attitude patterns within this trend included student selection criteria and the segregation function of higher education.

Selection Criteria

According to these metropolitan university administrators, higher education uses the admissions process to select those who will participate in advanced learning and those who will not. "We have, whether good or bad, restricted who can partake of higher education."

These administrators shared their concerns about finding the proper balance in the selectivity of the admissions process. As they stated, if institutions accept too many students and don't meet the needs of all those students, someone is left behind. But, if institutions increase their selection standards and select fewer students, then institutions are accused of supporting an elitist process. Some administrators supported a closed admissions process to remain loyal to the mission of the institution and to the needs of society. As one administrator offered, "If we lower the barriers, then accept everybody and keep everybody, then we are not producing what is needed for this society." An associate vice chancellor commented, "All the selection criteria would suggest that you know that you are inviting students who you can serve. But, you know the truth of it is,

there are all kinds of ways to get students in, and not even necessarily, those who we want to serve. In some cases, we set them up to fail."

For others, however, the value of higher education to society is in providing equal educational opportunity for all individuals in society. Because of this education value, higher education has a moral responsibility to keep the admission gates open to all. Furthermore, higher education is a transforming process of inviting in those students who are not qualified but who can still find success. Because higher education serves as a gatekeeper for individual success, the door of higher education must not close on anyone. According to one administrator, "I think we have a great moral responsibility to do what we can to keep those gates open for people of all entry levels and try not to be too discouraging."

The Segregation Function of Higher Education

According to the metropolitan administrators in this study, as the gatekeeper of knowledge and education, higher education is serving the role of segregating society between those who are educated and those who are not. Higher education uses the admissions process (to include testing and increasing academic expectations) to remove large segments of society from the opportunity of advanced learning. As one administrator stated, "One phenomenon that has been incorporated into our model and our country is the concept of intelligence or intelligence testing or achievement testing which is effecting the gatekeeper role that we see for ourselves."

Furthermore, some administrators voiced the opinion that different socioeconomic groups have a different focus on education. The wealthy view higher education as a liberal arts experience while the poor view higher education as an opportunity to gain certain employable skills that will lift them from their current socioeconomic status. According to these administrators:

> "There is a [socio-economic] division based on intellectual accomplishment that is affecting the life of our country."

> "Powership explains the future traditions that I think are coming; the rich will get

richer and more 'information-reaching', [while] the poor will get poorer, creating more divisions that we can even imagine."

"The concept that people are stratified by achievement, which we sometimes measure as intelligent or achievement tests, and we limit access based on a certain type of intelligence, is affecting the way our country is developing."

"If you are a first-generation college student from a working family, the extreme focus of that experience is on employment because this is route out of poverty or out of the lower middle income into the upper middle income ranks. From a more elitist background, ... higher education is for those already at the skill level and motivational level necessary to succeed."

Attitude Trend: Student's Readiness to Learn

The student's readiness to learn is another major factor of institutional effectiveness according to administrators of a southern, metropolitan university. Readiness to learn is impacted by: a) student opportunity, b) academic preparation, c) academic immaturity, d) love of learning, and e) educational barriers.

Student Opportunity

A few administrators voiced the opinion that students do not take advantage of all the opportunities offered to them by the higher education experience. They believed that most students have short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goal is to receive the credential to find a job. According to administrators this short-term focus on employment interferes with the student's longer-term desire to engage in the learning process. "I've always said students have short-run goals and long-run goals. The short-run goal is to get a job. The long-run goal is that they would like to have an education." Additionally, another administrator commented, "The students are consumed by their short-run goals from economic necessity. As professionals, we always have to weigh in against that and [develop programs which] emphasize the long-run goal."

A more appropriate strategy, according to administrators, would be a focus on the process of education and not on the outcome of finding a job. To assist students in their focus on their long-term goal, as compared with a focus on the short-term, these administrators believed that it is their responsibility to design a structure that makes certain components of the education process mandatory for student participation. According to one dean, "At any school, to get students to actually take advantage of an opportunity when it is offered [is difficult]. Seldom will they [voluntarily] avail themselves. So you have to structure the situation in such a way that they are required to be there, and then, they will. "

Academic Preparation

According to this group of administrators, individuals enter the higher education experience at a variety of levels of educational preparation. In their opinion, the student's readiness to accept the transforming process of advanced learning is an important component in ensuring a quality outcome. It is important that higher education administrators recognize these varying levels of preparedness and provide structures to accommodate all levels of academic maturity and academic readiness. As one associate vice chancellor said, "[Students] will come with varying degrees of preparedness which would suggest and have all kinds of implications for the curriculum."

Academic Immaturity

These administrators expressed frustration with the amount of time they must spend in reacting to student demands. They believed that part of this problem stems from student academic immaturity and their willingness to procrastinate. This immaturity influences the administrator's ability to manage their area proactively instead of reactively. Furthermore, student's increasing demands for due process further drains the time resource of administrators.

Love of Learning

Higher education should communicate the joy of learning to all constituents, according to these educational leaders. The process of finding the joy of learning assumes a student population who share a strong love for learning similar to the love of learning experienced by administrators when they were students. Included in the joy of learning is

building a student curiosity about knowledge, life, and learning so that the student will become a lifelong learner. "Our country is founded, after all, on a tradition which entitles people to learn as long and as much as they want to...The realization that you are a universal learner. You are a continuous learner. The hope that higher education would let people know that you are expected to learn all of your life. You are expected to be a continuous learner." According to these administrators, unfortunately, too many constituents of higher education view the university as the "culminating experience" to the education process.

Education Barriers

These administrators recognized that students have many barriers to successfully pursing advanced learning. These barriers include a) student financing of the college degree, b) other life commitments, and c) student motivation to achieve. However, administrators also believe that students should focus on using time wisely and not on the total amount of time required to move through higher education successfully. It is the opinion of many of these administrators that students should develop strategies to overcome these barriers instead of allowing the barriers to overcome their attempt at advanced learning.

Attitude Trend: Developing a Scholarly Community

For the metropolitan university administrators in this study, of importance in providing an effective higher education environment and process is the development of a scholarly community. According to these university leaders, one goal of the university should include the building of a strong community of learners or community of scholars. One department chair commented, "I would like to see a community of learning. Basically it is the idea, I think, of 'connectiveness' between those people who are identified as faculty and those who are students and those who are staff, and maybe the distinctions aren't mutually exclusive." As stated by one administrator, "At my perfect university, I would have a place where both faculty and students had a sense of stronger allegiance to the community and to the larger university community as opposed to the department."

These administrators lamented, however, that the current structure of higher education with separate academic departments, programs, and disciplines foster isolation instead of community . "I just think there is so much psychic energy wasted, counter-productive activities that accompany departmentalization." Administrators expressed a desire to teach students the value of holistic education and breaking down artificial boundaries to enhance collaboration and team work. "We departmentalize; we draw lines to distinguish between academic pursuits. The university is also a place where you[can] set up those divisions or you can knock them down."

Finally, these administrators talked about the influence of taking courses in a time-constrained semester and the awarding of degrees as a further hindrance on community building. One department chair commented, "I think it is ridiculous to put life into semesters or whatever it is ." Another administrator described this university with a community of scholars as a place where, "...[Students] would come to be trained as an all-around people. [Students] would never graduate -- never, ever get a degree. [Instead, students] would have competencies." Within this topic of the scholarly community, these administrators discussed a) human resources, b) the student bond, c) stop-outs versus drop-outs, d) faculty, e) the support structure, and f) the "time resource".

Human Resources

According to these administrators, the ideal university is one which values all the internal constituents of the institution which include faculty, students, and staff. This ideal would ensure that all constituents recognize their importance to the well-being of the institution. According to one department chair, "[The ideal university is] a university which values the whole spectrum -- faculty, students and staff -- so that an effort is made to keep excellent people in all of those positions. I think that ensures or helps to ensure that the university, in fact, does work well when people feel valued and are, in fact, recognized for that." Included in this belief in the value of the human resource is the idea that administrators and faculty should serve as role models for students, as mentors. Furthermore, there is the belief that students are a vitally important component in the university human resource triad and, therefore, the university should provide a variety of teaching methods and a cadre of services to accommodate the diverse student population.

Student Bond

To improve retention, higher education administrators stressed the importance of developing strategies that will encourage student involvement in the educational process. For these administrators, student involvement equates to persistence and graduation. But more importantly, according to these leaders, student involvement strengthens the bond between the student and the university. Because of the importance of student involvement and the student-to-university bond, these administrators believed it is their responsibility to build a university structure that encourages involvement in the educational process. According to one administrator, "There has to be some effort to create a bond among the students as well as the university."

Stop-outs versus Drop-outs

These higher education leaders realized that different students have different expectations for the attainment of knowledge. Administrators further recognize that these expectations may motivate a student to attend college for only one year or take as long as six years, or even longer, to complete. Administrators believed it is important to understand the difference between a stop-out and a drop-out in order to develop educational strategies specific to both possibilities.

Faculty

Administrators discussed the idea that faculty evaluations should measure the ability of the faculty to make a difference in a student's life. In the view of administrators, quality faculty willingly spend time with students while serving as academic role models. These quality faculty members have the following traits: a) a sound scholarly record, b) strong pedagogical skills, c) good communication skills, and d) excellent people skills. As stated by one dean, "The one thing that I request is a faculty member's ability to produce a difference in students." Another university leader stated, "I would start with a cadre of faculty who would be willing to work with students inside the classroom, as well as, outside the classroom."

According to administrators, it is their responsibility to provide a) mechanisms that allow faculty more time with students, b) strategies to meet student needs, and c) a hiring process that ensures the employment of quality faculty. As one department chair stated,

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"Faculty is effective to the extent in which they have rendered themselves superfluous to the students by the end of the course of study. Administrators are effective to the extent which enable faculty to become superfluous to the students." Another educational leader said, "I think that the most precious resource that we can offer [students and faculty] is time."

Support Structure

As stated by these administrators, it is the responsibility of administration to provide a support structure for faculty, students, other staff, and external constituents to ensure the quality of the educational process and environment. "Administrators in a sense get the things that the teachers need together, and help them organize and work together, so that they can do what they need to do as teachers." According to one vice chancellor, "You strive to give faculty the tools to help them teach. You strive to give administrators tools that will help them administer and make decisions. It is just a tool." This support structure includes advanced technology. It, also, accommodates the stated mission of the institution while enabling students to go beyond their own expectations. "I think if an institution is going to remain efficient, it must nurture and support its administrative staff, faculty, and support staff. [If not], what you will find is considerable dissatisfaction which, I think, will just undermine the possibility of the university meeting its potential."

Time Resource

According to the metropolitan university administrators in this study, the most valuable resource that administrators could offer to faculty and students is the time to engage in scholarly activity and in a mentoring relationship. With this stated, these administrators recognized that traditional administrative strategies were more about minimizing the time resource, instead of maximizing time. Higher education has developed methods which ensure the efficient delivery of knowledge -- e.g. large classrooms, higher faculty to student ratios, the use of graduate teaching assistants, and promoting the use of the lecture method of teaching -- instead of focusing on strategies which ensure the effective delivery of knowledge. As stated by one dean, "[In the ideal university], we would put an emphasis on the time students spend with us, and the quality of that time. Yet in our real university, we minimize that. We put 300 students in a room and put a

graduate assistant with them. So, we are not interested in quality and we are not interested in time."

Summary

The data from the focus group sessions were reduced into six attitude trends: a) the definition of higher education, b) the assessment of higher education, c) the higher education curriculum, d) selection of students for the higher education opportunity, e) student's readiness to learn, and f) developing a scholarly community. Within the definition of higher education attitude trend, administrators discussed the importance of knowledge synthesis, societal embrace, the institutional mission, the societal product, and institutional stratification in the American higher education system. Included in the assessment of higher education attitude trend, administrators shared their attitudes concerning the numbers of higher education, the qualitative components of higher education, components of student satisfaction, and the state role in higher education. Administrators also discussed attitudes related to the higher education curriculum with a focus on the purpose of the higher education curriculum, knowledge delivery, stage development theory of college students, holistics education, and the instrumental nature of higher education.

In the student selection attitude trend, administrators talked of their attitudes as related to the selection criteria used by universities and the segregation function of higher education. The attitudes related to the fifth attitude trend, student's readiness to learn, were related to student involvement in the higher education experience, student academic preparation, academic immaturity, finding the love of learning, and eliminating educational barriers. Finally, included in the attitude trend of developing a scholarly community, administrators focused on the value of the human resource, the university-student bond, the difference between the stop-out and the drop-out, the importance of faculty, the support structure, and the value of the time resource.

DISCUSSION

The metropolitan university mission is grounded in the philosophical mooring of some higher education leaders to the belief that the emerging university model is one that constructs a bridge between the higher education community and the metropolitan community. This philosophical arrival is informing an increasingly popular movement among urban leaders and urban university leaders to redefine the traditional components of the academic triad -- teaching, research, and outreach -- to support a renewed focus on the town-gown relationship. Because of the role of the metropolitan university administrator as resource allocator and information gatekeeper, the success of the university-metropolis partnership is contingent on the motivation of the university administrator to adopt the metropolitan mission.

In the literature to date, founders of the metropolitan university movement have focused their attention on defining the characteristics of the metropolitan university and using those characteristics to build an argument in support of the metropolitan mission. The literature has not offered empirical evidence as to the motivation of the university administrator in designing strategies for the successful implementation of the mission. It can be suggested that a university leader's motivation to disseminate information and allocate resources based on the components of the metropolitan mission is driven by the congruency between their evaluative criteria and the metropolitan mission.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the evaluate criteria of university administrators from a southern, metropolitan university and to determine the congruency between those criteria and the metropolitan mission. A qualitative research design using a focus group method of inquiry was employed to explore the attitudes of university leaders regarding institutional effectiveness. The criteria administrators use to evaluate effectiveness emerged from the attitude trends uncovered from the focus group data.

Administrator Evaluative Criteria

After analysis of the six administrator attitude trends -- a) the definition of higher education, b) the assessment of higher education, c) the higher education curriculum, d) selection of students for the higher education opportunity, e) student's readiness to learn,

and f) developing a scholarly community -- the criteria administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness were grouped into three categories.

The first category includes those criteria which address the educational geography of the university. Just as with the vernacular definition of geography, educational geography is defined by the specifics of the process or the content of learning. For these administrators, the geography is defined by the process of knowledge dissemination, the process of building competencies, the process of promoting collaboration, and the process of managing resources.

Those criteria which evaluate the effectiveness of the educational terrain are included in the second category. Once again, similar to the common understanding of terrain, the educational terrain is the environment which surrounds, supports, and nurtures the educational geography. As the geography is the content of the educational process, the terrain is the context of that process. The terrain of the metropolitan university is characterized for these administrators by an environment of choices, an environment of community, and an environment of learning. Finally, the third category of evaluative criteria is the amalgamation of geography and terrain into the final educational landscape of the higher education experience which, according to the metropolitan university administrator, should provide a benefit for both the individual student and for society.

In the vernacular, geography is the descriptive study of the specific characteristics of earth, the terrain is a portion of the land which is considered for its fitness for some specific purpose, and the landscape is a board view of the natural scenery which encompasses a view of the geography and the terrain. Using this allegory for the findings of this study, the educational geography becomes the descriptive study of the specific characteristics of the higher education process, the educational terrain represents the higher education environment which must accommodate the purpose of the institution, and the landscape becomes the board view of the benefit of higher education when the geography and terrain are congruent.

The Educational Geography

The criteria these metropolitan university administrators use to evaluate the effectiveness of the content of the educational process are related to the quality of the

knowledge dissemination process, building competencies process, and promoting collaboration process.

Process of Knowledge Dissemination

Metropolitan university leaders evaluate the effectiveness of their institution based on the successful implementation of an educational process that improves the learner's ability to synthesize knowledge from a variety of knowledge sources. To ensure that students have the opportunity for synthesis, administrators evaluate the methods in which the knowledge is disseminated to students through the curriculum. One primary concern of administrators is that the dissemination of knowledge to students is offered in a variety of different delivery options to accommodate the diverse learning needs of students and that the knowledge is effectively communicated through the most appropriate communication mediums. Finally, in this dissemination process administrators recognize that neither faculty nor the higher education institution are not the only effective transmitters of knowledge.

Process of Building Competencies

In evaluating institutional effectiveness, metropolitan university administrators use criteria which focus on the effectiveness of educational processes designed to develop student competencies. The most important of these processes is the curriculum. For the administrators in this study, a quality curriculum is one in which students not only acquire employable skills but also develop a strong curiosity to motivate them to inquire about knowledge, life, and learning. For the effective university, the higher education curriculum is, both, a certification and maturation process. As a certification process, the effective curriculum offers learners a practical education which is relevant to the requirements of the profession. As a maturation process, the effective curriculum is an opportunity for the learner to "add-on" to the accumulated knowledge of their life experiences, to develop a joy for lifelong learning, and, more importantly, to begin to understand the "why's" of education.

Included in their evaluative criteria, some of these administrators addressed the importance of the quantitative assessment of the business side of the educational process: such as, counting the numbers of graduates each year. However, most of these university

leaders discussed the value of an educational assessment process which qualitatively measured the development of learner competencies. Included in this qualitative assessment of effectiveness, are those evaluative criteria which would address the quality of teaching within the institution. For the effective institution, teaching quality is defined, in part, by the amount of energy expended by faculty in developing instruction that is individualized to the learner.

Process of Promoting Collaboration

Included in the evaluative criteria for institutional effectiveness, these university leaders discussed the importance of developing an educational process which facilitates a university partnership with society, with the K-12 educational system, and with the higher education student. The purpose of this collaborative process is to build a community of learners or a community of scholars working together to discover and disseminate knowledge.

Within the university-to-student partnership, these administrators discussed their perception that the primary components of student satisfaction are the quality and the convenience of the process. Whereas their effectiveness criteria may not always incorporate both of these two satisfaction components, these administrators did discuss the importance of considering quality and convenience, as perceived by the student, in their daily decision making. Also important to the university-to-student partnership, these administrators included evaluative criteria of processes which reduce educational barriers for students by understanding the different motivations of student drop-outs as compared with student stop-outs.

Process of Managing Resources

To evaluate the effectiveness of the metropolitan university, these educational leaders stressed a priority in developing effective resource management processes to accomplish the stated mission of the higher education institution. Furthermore, these administrators evaluate the effectiveness of these processes based on the ability of the process to successfully meet the needs of a diverse student population. Included as one of these student needs is the opportunity of students to share time with faculty and with other students. According to one dean, "I think that the most precious resource that we can offer

[students and faculty] is time."

Educational Terrain

In evaluating the effectiveness of their institution, these educational leaders discussed attitudes concerning the importance of the higher education environment to the successful implementation of effective educational processes. From the discussion of these administrators, it is reasonable to deduce that the effectiveness of the educational content is directly related to the quality of the educational context. Included in the context of the educational terrain are the evaluative criteria which verify the effectiveness of an environment providing student choices, an environment of community, and an environment of learning.

Environment Providing Student Choices

For these administrators, the effectiveness of the process of knowledge dissemination and the process of building competencies is achievable only if those processes are offered in an environment which supports and facilitates student choice. Not only did these administrators recognize the importance of the curriculum choices made by students and the short-term or long-term goal choices made by students, but they also discussed the necessity of providing an environment that accommodates a decision to stop-out as opposed to dropping-out of the process. Included in this environment of choices, these educational leaders discussed the value of the institutional stratification within the American higher education system to providing students with a choice of institutions with a variety of institutional missions.

Environment of Community

Just as the effectiveness of the environment of choice is critical to the quality in the knowledge-dissemination and competency-building processes, the environment of community is important to the success of the process of promoting collaboration. These administrators have evaluative criteria which verify the effectiveness of the higher education terrain to supporting the collaborative processes. As mentioned earlier, these administrators valued a collaborative relationship between the university and society, and the university and other institutions of education, both traditional and nontraditional. Furthermore, they valued collaboration within the university and across disciplinary lines to

break the artificial barriers created by departmentalization.

More importantly, these university leaders stressed the necessity of building a bond between the university and the student. To build this bond, the effective educational terrain is one in which student involvement is encouraged, educational barriers are overcome, and academic immaturity is addressed. The purpose of this collaboration-rich soil in the educational terrain is to grow a community of learners. For these administrators, an important aspect in the growth of this community is providing an environment in which faculty are encouraged, and rewarded, for making a difference in the life of each, individual student.

Environment of Learning

Finally within the educational terrain, the fitness of the higher education environment to the purpose of learning is another area which administrators have evaluative criteria for determining the effectiveness of their institution. For these administrators, the effective environment for learning is one in which students are encouraged to find joy in learning. It facilitates a quality learning experience by synthesizing knowledge from multifarious sources into an easily accessible medium. It is an environment which invites storytelling as a method of communicating knowledge and fosters an educational experience embedded in the liberal arts or an experience informed by instrumentalism and specialization, or both.

Educational Landscape

Finally, the institutional effectiveness evaluative criteria of these metropolitan university administrators, included those criteria which verify the effectiveness of the geography and terrain by appreciating the beauty of the landscape. For these administrators when the geography and the terrain work in harmony, the resulting landscape beauty is evident in the benefit of the educational experience for the individual and society. For the individual, the outcome of an effective university experience includes:

- a developed sense of self,
- an ability to synthesize knowledge,
- the realization of a better life,
- the competencies needed to make intelligent choices in life,

- a holistic education of mind, body, and soul,
- an understanding of the logic and ethics of their profession,
- and, an appreciation for the value of lifelong learning.

For society, the return on an investment in an effective university provides societal benefits which include:

- the preparation of societal and employment leaders,
- a social institution poised to discover and disseminate knowledge that will move humanity forward,
- the development of a cadre of citizens who will become productive members of society,
- the opportunity for an intergenerational benefit of education in which the education of each generation has a positive affect on the next generation,
- and, the process of higher education which certifies the preparation of the student for a given profession.

Within this landscape, these university administrators voiced a concern with the influence of an increasing focus by society on the instrumental purpose for higher education to the detriment of, in their opinion, the liberal arts purpose. Furthermore, these administrators discussed their perception of the "gatekeeper" role of higher education to the socio-economic success of American society and the, subsequent, result of that role on the increasing segregation of society into two classes: those who have education and those who do not. Finally, as is related to this gatekeeper role, these administrators debated the value of a closed-admissions process to ensuring the societal benefit of higher education, as compared to, the value of an open-admissions process to society.

Summary

The evaluative criteria the metropolitan university administrators in this study use to verify the effectiveness of their institution emerged from the analysis of the six attitude trends and were categorized into one of three constructs: educational geography, terrain, or landscape. In the educational geography, administrator evaluative criteria related to the effectiveness of the process of knowledge dissemination, the process of building competencies, the process of promoting collaboration, and the process of managing

resources. The effectiveness of the educational terrain was based on the fitness of the environment of student choices, the environment of community, and the environment of learning to support the geography. Holistically, the overall effectiveness of the university, for these administrators, was verified by the beauty of the educational landscape evidenced in the realization of higher education benefits by the individual and by society.

Congruency Between the Administrator Evaluative Criteria and the Metropolitan Mission

In the metropolitan mission, the founders of the metropolitan university movement declared their commitment to a synergistic philosophy for the university and the surrounding metropolis. For the sake of analysis, the "Declaration of Metropolitan Universities" statement was separated into four sections: (a) the over-arching philosophy of the metropolitan university, (b) the philosophy of teaching, (c) the philosophy of research, and (d) the philosophy of professional service.

In the first section, the over-arching philosophy, the metropolitan university movement founders underscored their commitment to the traditional purpose of the university in the creation and dissemination of knowledge while emphasizing their resolve to utilize that traditional purpose to solve the unique problems of the metropolitan region. This over-arching philosophy is congruent with the evaluative criteria of administrators in this study in assessing the effectiveness of the process of knowledge dissemination and the environment of learning. In, both, the process and the environment, these administrators discussed the importance of providing learners with knowledge disseminated from a variety of sources.

Furthermore, the philosophy is congruent with the administrator evaluative criteria in the stated purpose for the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge. For the metropolitan university founders, the importance of this knowledge process is to address the problems of the metropolitan region. According to the administrators in this study, the evaluative criteria within the educational landscape of providing societal leaders, a cadre of productive citizens, and a social institution poised to move humanity forward are congruent with the knowledge purpose stated in the metropolitan mission.

In the second section of the metropolitan mission, founders stressed the importance of providing a teaching process which would educate individuals holistically and as professional practitioners, a process which would adapt to the needs of a diverse metropolitan student population, and a process which would combine knowledge with practical application. The evaluative criteria of administrators for the process of building competencies in the geography are congruent with this commitment of providing students with a holistic and professional education. Furthermore, the evaluative criteria of the process of knowledge dissemination in offering different delivery options to accommodate student diversity is congruent with the metropolitan university focus on the teaching process for a metropolitan student population. Finally, these administrators have evaluative criteria of the process of building competencies which relates to the value of combining knowledge with practical application for an education that is relevant to the student experience.

The metropolitan university movement founders emphasized the importance of utilizing university research to link investigation with practical application and to create interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary partnerships with the purpose of addressing metropolitan problems in the third section of the mission statement. Based on the findings of this research, a congruency does exist between this component of the mission and the evaluative criteria of the environment of community in providing a university which can build partnerships across departmental boundaries.

The fourth section of the metropolitan mission -- philosophy on professional public service -- is congruent with the evaluative criteria of these administrators as is related to the process of building collaboration and to the assessment of effectiveness within the environment of community for the university. As stated in the mission, the professional public service philosophy for the metropolitan university is linked with the construction of "creative partnerships" between the region and the university. Included in the development of these creative partnerships is the relationship between the university and the K-12 environment. This philosophy does have a strong, direct correlation with the evaluative criteria of building collaboration and providing a community environment. Finally, a congruency does exist between the professional public service component of the mission

and the evaluative criteria of the administrators in this study as related to the contribution to the general quality of life made by the university to the society within the educational landscape.

Lack of Congruency

There is no evidence to support a congruency between the administrator evaluative criteria and the metropolitan mission in three areas. First, whereas there is a specific component in the metropolitan mission statement related to the importance of applied research for the metropolitan university, the administrators in this study did not offer evidence of evaluative criteria based on the creation or discovery of knowledge as important to the effective institution. It can be suggested that included within their evaluative criteria for the process of knowledge dissemination is an assumption of knowledge creation or discovery. However, there is no direct evidence in the findings of this study related to evaluative criteria for applied research.

Second, it is important to note that these administrators discussed the partnership with the university and society, and not, a partnership between the university and the metropolitan region as is mentioned in the metropolitan mission. It is reasonable to suggest that the terms "society" and "metropolitan region" are synonymous and, therefore, a congruency is evident between the administrator voice and the mission. However, it is also reasonable to suggest that by using the larger term "society", these metropolitan university leaders do not equate institutional effectiveness with a connection to the quality of life in the immediate community. Instead, these administrators still focus their definition of effectiveness based on the traditional societal value of the university.

Finally, the administrators in this study focused more attention on evaluative criteria as related to the metropolitan student population than was evident in the components of the metropolitan mission. For example, these administrators suggested evaluative criteria for the process of building collaboration and the effectiveness of the environment of community based on a partnership between the university and the metropolitan student. The content of the metropolitan mission statement is specific to the university-metropolitan region partnership and the university-public education partnership. However, the mission does not address the value of a university-student collaboration.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, a congruency does exist between the criteria metropolitan university administrators use to evaluate institutional effectiveness and the metropolitan mission. More specifically, the evaluative criteria used by the university leaders in this study to assess the effectiveness of the educational geography, educational terrain, and educational landscape of their institution are congruent with the philosophical focus on teaching, research, and public service as communicated within the metropolitan university mission.

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the congruency between the evaluative criteria of the metropolitan university administrator and the metropolitan university mission to assess the motivation of administrators to implementing the stated mission. With this conclusion of congruency, and the stated purpose of this study, it is important to recognize the potential influence of the incongruent areas on the motivation of administrators to implementing the metropolitan mission.

The attention given to the university-student partnership by administrators as compared with the metropolitan mission is of little concern to the motivation of administrators to executing the mission. However, the lack of evidence to support the evaluative criteria of administrators for applied research and the use of the term "society" as compared with "metropolitan region" may have an influence on their motivation. If this lack of evidence is, in fact, representative of a deficiency in their evaluative criteria as related to applied research and the connection with the metropolitan region, then it may suggest a fundamental difference between administrator philosophies of institutional effectiveness and the philosophy of the metropolitan mission. Because applied research and the symbiotic relationship with the metropolitan region is central to the metropolitan university mission, this philosophical difference could undermine the motivation of administrators to implementing the mission through strategic planning.

Implications of the Findings

Because of the exploratory nature of this research and the stated purpose for this study, the implications of these findings are limited to the metropolitan university literature.

As stated earlier, the metropolitan university movement is still in infancy. The literature to date has, as would be expected for an emerging concept, focused primarily on defining the characteristics of a metropolitan university and on building an argument in support of this addition to the higher education community. Whereas this focus in the literature has served an important role in providing higher education scholars with food for thought, it is imperative to the long-term success of the movement for scholars to begin an empirical investigation into the nuances of the metropolitan mission and the metropolitan university. An important first step in exploring these nuances is to examine the attitudes of the metropolitan university constituents toward the metropolitan philosophy. The purpose of this study was to take that important first step by examining the attitudes of administrators.

The findings from this research presenting the attitude patterns and trends of the metropolitan university administrator provides an important foundation to understanding their perception of higher education and the effective institution. The evaluative criteria of these administrators in the geography, terrain, and landscape gleaned from the attitude trends, add valuable insight on administrator decision-making and resource allocation.

Finally, the discussion of the congruency between the evaluative criteria and the metropolitan mission provides scholars with a first glimpse at the motivation of university administrators in developing strategic plans to implement the metropolitan philosophy. Furthermore, the lack of evidence to support a congruency as related to applied research and the connection with the metropolitan region provides valuable information as to the content-focus of future literature on the metropolitan university philosophy to facilitate the success of the metropolitan mission.

Call for Further Research

As mentioned, the significance of this study is the knowledge added to the metropolitan university literature on one important constituent of the university: the administrator. To complete this exploration into the likelihood of the success of the metropolitan university movement, empirical investigation is needed on the effectiveness attitudes of the metropolitan university faculty. Furthermore, it is also important to explore the criteria used by metropolitan students to determine satisfaction with the educational

experience to build empirical evidence portraying the connection between student satisfaction and components of the metropolitan mission.

A final link in this discussion is an investigation into the effectiveness attitudes of state legislators, business and community leaders, and educational leaders in the K-12 arena. Because these individuals are the decision-makers in the resource-sending environment for the metropolitan university, their perception of quality is an important bridge between the statement of a metropolitan mission and the implementation of that mission. Finally, with the evidence collected from these three constituents of the university, an important final step is determining the congruency between the criteria of administrators, faculty, students, and metropolitan leaders to the components of the metropolitan mission.

In addition to the call for continued qualitative research into the criteria of various university constituents is the need for the development of a longitudinal quantitative survey, based on the findings from these qualitative explorations, to assess constituent attitudes about the metropolitan mission. With this information, the leaders of the metropolitan university movement can begin to track attitude patterns and trends over time. This insight would enhance future university decision-making which should facilitate the success of the metropolitan university movement.

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Appendix A

Declaration of Metropolitan Universities

We, the leaders of metropolitan universities and colleges, embracing the historical values and principles which define all universities and colleges, and which make our institutions major intellectual resources for their metropolitan regions (Johnson & Bell, p. viii, 1995),

- reaffirm that the creation, interpretation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are the fundamental functions of our universities;
- assert and accept a broadened responsibility to bring these functions to bear on the needs of our metropolitan regions;
- commit our institutions to be responsive to the needs of our metopolitan areas by seeking new ways of using our human and physical resources to provide leadership in addressing metropolitan problems, through teaching, research, and professional service.

Our teaching must:

- educate individuals to be informed and effective citizens, as well as capable practitioners of professions and occupations;
- be adapted to the particular needs of metropolitan students, including minorities and other underserved groups, adults of all ages, and the place-bound;
- combine research-based knowledge with practical application and experience, using the best current technology and pedagogical techniques.

Our research must:

- seek and exploit opportunities for linking basic investigation with practical application, and for creating synergistic interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary scholarly partnerships for attacking complex metropolitan problems, while meeting the highest scholarly standards of the academic community.

Our professional service must include:

- development of creative partnerships with public and private enterprises that ensure that the intellectual resources of our institutions are fully engaged with such enterprises in mutually beneficial ways;
- close working relationships with the elementary and secondary schools of our metropolitan regions, aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the entire metropolitan education system, from preschool through post-doctoral levels;
- the fullest possible contributions to the cultural life and general quality of life of our metropolitan regions.

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